



COLORADO

**Hazardous Materials
& Waste Management Division**

Department of Public Health & Environment

August 24, 2021

Laura Williams, Response Unit Chief
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, Colorado 80202-1129

Via e-mail to: Williams.Laura@epa.gov

RE: Potential CERCLA Removal Action - Howards Fork Tailings, San Miguel County, Colorado

Dear Ms. Williams:

As you know, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has been working with EPA Region VIII and other stakeholders for the last several years to characterize and remediate sources of mining waste along the Howards Fork of the San Miguel River near Ophir, in San Miguel County Colorado.

Past characterization efforts have identified several sources of contamination that potentially impact human health and the environment, including nearby residents of Ophir, and the San Miguel River downstream of the site. Addressing the significant volume of tailings associated with the Howards Fork tailings is the next logical step in reducing metals loads to the San Miguel, and mitigating potential human exposures in an area that receives significant recreational use. Unfortunately, limited resources would not allow state or local authorities to remediate this source of contamination in the foreseeable future. Therefore, a CERCLA removal action is likely the most expedient method to reduce the human health and environmental risks posed by this site.

Should EPA decide to proceed with a response action at this site, Colorado looks forward to providing support as part of its on-going efforts to render care, assistance and advice in accordance with the National Contingency Plan and at the direction of EPA's on-scene coordinators and remedial project managers, as set forth in section 107(d) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(d).



If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (303) 692-3404.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Douglas C. Jamison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' and 'J'.

Douglas C. Jamison
Superfund\Brownfields Unit Leader
Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Division

cc: Joni Sandoval, EPA
Jason King, COAGO
Jeff Graves, DRMS

